to the injured and dependents of the deceased;

(b) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the incident; and

(c) if so, the details and findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) 68 (49 Identified and 19 Unidentified) passengers including 03 staff of Railway Protection Force (who were escorting the train) died in the incident of fire in two coaches of Train No. 4001 Up Delhi — Attari Express while running in Diwana — Panipat section over Delhi Division of Northern Railway in the night of 18.02.2007. 12 injured passengers (07 Grievous and 05 Simple) who were initially admitted to Civil Hospital, Panipat were shifted to Safdarjung Hospital/New Delhi for better treatment.

(b) and (c) A statutory inquiry into the incident has been ordered to be conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle.

Government Railway Police/Panipat has also registered a case *vide* No. 28/2007 dated 19.02.2007 under section 302, 307, 324 & 438 IPC, 150, 151, 152 of the Railways Act, 3, 4 & 6 of Indian Explosives ACT and 3 & 4 of Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and took up investigation. The cause of fire is suspected to be explosions of incendiary bombs/improvised explosive devices in the coaches.

Measures taken for surveillance of Leprosy

*175. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the finance Minister in his budget speech of 2006-07 had announced that the elimination of leprosy has been achieved in December, 2005; and

(b) if so, the measures that have been taken thereafter to monitor the surveillance of the disease, so far?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) Yes, Sir. The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 2006-07 had announced that elimination of leprosy as a public health problem had been achieved in December, 2005.

(b) India has achieved elimination of leprosy as a public health problem *i.e.* Prevalence Rate of the disease is less than 1 per 10,000 population

(as per WHO definition) and it was 0.95 per 10,000 population in December, 2005. As new cases keep on occurring, diagnosis and treatment services are being regularly provided through all Primary Health Centres and Government Hospitals and the Prevalence Rate is being regularly monitored by receiving monthly epidemiological situation report from all States/UTs through an inbuilt system of NLEP. The prevalence rate has further declined to 0.83 per 10,000 population in December, 2006.

Farm facilities to farmers at low rates

†*176. SHRI MAHENDRA SAHNI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 40 per cent farmers in the country are willing to abandon the profitless cultivation as per the fresh data of the National Sample Survey;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering upon any proposal to formulate new schemes to provide electricity, water, fertilizers and seeds at low rates to farmers;

(d) if so, whether the State Governments have been consulted in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) As per Report No. 496 on Situation Assessment Survey of Farmers titled "Some Aspects of Farming" of the National Sample Survery Organization (NSSO), 60 per cent of farmer households at all-India level reported that they liked farming as a profession. The remaining 40 per cent reported that, given a choice, they would take up some other career. Of the 40 per cent, those who did not like farming as a profession, 27 per cent did not find agriculture profitable. While 8 per cent thought agriculture as a risky venture, the remaining 5 per cent disliked it for some other reasons including low social status.

(c) to (e) In order to ensure that the farmers get fertilizers, seeds and irrigation facilities at low rates, subsidized inputs are made available through

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.